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NEWS

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STATEMENT OF HONORABLE HERBERT H. BATEMAN

CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY READINESS

HEARING ON DOD ACQUISITION WORKFORCE

April 8, 1997

I would like to thank Chairman Hunter for including the Readiness Subcommittee in this important hearing. Over the past several years, Mr. Hunter has been in the forefront in efforts to find ways to streamline the acquisition process, and I commend him for his good work. There is, however, much more to be done in this area.

There is little disagreement that the Administration's budget request for modernization has been severely underfunded in spite of warnings from the senior military leadership. It is also clear that additional funds for procurement will have to come from within the existing overall DOD budget. These facts drive us to extensively scrutinize the budget for any and all savings.

The committee has been charged by senior House leadership to look for ways to reduce the bureaucracy of the Pentagon. The committee and the Readiness Subcommittee has been looking at a large number of

reform initiatives that, I believe, will do just that. One of the areas that needs to be looked at closely is the acquisition process.

Since 1990, there has been significant reductions in the military workforce, military and civilians alike. However, the number of organizations supporting acquisition have remained the same. In spite of efforts in other areas to consolidate like functions, acquisition organizations have resisted efforts to merge common areas such as personnel, budgeting, computer specialists, contracting, and other areas that are not unique to an acquisition organization's basic mission.

As we look at the acquisition workforce problem, we must also keep in mind the readiness needs of our military forces. Reducing civilian personnel must be accomplished in a rational manner without causing further damage to an overall readiness condition that, at this time, is fragile. Over the past few years, I have watched as large numbers of civilian employees have been eliminated from the workforce simply to get to a mandated ceiling. Many of these reductions were taken from the low end, or blue collar support sector, while the upper end, the white collar management end, has remained in tact. This approach will damage readiness if we are not careful.

I join with my colleagues in welcoming our witness here today and I look forward to their testimony. Thank you Mr. Chairman.